WHIRRAKEE

September 2015

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Office Bearers for 2014 - 2015

President	*vacant*		
Vice President	Jenny Shield	e-mail: jennyshield66@gmail.com	5441 4029
Secretary/Public Officer	Matt Comer		0409 162 627
Treasurer	Ben Goonan		

Positions delegated by the Committee

Minute Secretary	*vacant*	
Excursion organiser	John Lindner	5448 3406
Syllabus organiser	Ben Goonan	
Librarian	Diana Collier & Maryann Hill	5443 0137
Garden Convenor/Secretary	Jan Orr	
Hall Management	Maurie Lewis (assisted by Rob Moors)	0407 427179
Whirrakee contact/editor	Sabine Wilkens e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	5443 2797
Whirrakee mailing coordinator	*vacant*	
Website coordinator/Webmaster	Ben Goonan	

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $40; Family $50; Concession: Single $35; Family $40. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $40.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The meeting starts with members sharing their recent natural history observations. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Alistair White, Kerrie Norris, Diana Collier, Devi Shanty, Simon Hay, John McCallum

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5442 6188 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5442 6188. To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 36, No. 8, September 2015
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*), which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions should be posted or e-mailed to the editor at least two days prior to the last Wednesday of the month. They will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although space restrictions occasionally require shortening of articles or holding them over till the following edition of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
Amongst all the happenings of spring, the glorious wattles and the sheer joy of watching courtship and nest building going on all around us, here is my yearly appeal: please nominate for a position or to be a member of the club's committee at the upcoming Annual General Meeting. Like many other clubs and societies, the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is facing many challenges and changes over the next few years. You can be part of this change and determine which direction the club will go, if you are part of the decision making team. I urge you to consider taking a more active part in the life of the BFNC by coming to the Annual General Meeting and being prepared to nominate or be nominated. Nominations on the night are acceptable.

Front page photographer: Joy Clusker
During club excursions, the real field-natting happens. Here, Devi Shanti is having a close look at an unknown wattle. For wattle identification, the number of flowers per head often needs to be counted (as well as other minute features), so a hand lens is absolutely essential on a wattle excursion. The wattle excursion report and more photos will appear next month, but a sneak preview of the glorious vista of the Whirrakee wattle in full bloom is given on page 7.

Short Notices

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 9 September 2015 at 7.30pm. It will be followed by the speaker (see back page for details). See you there.

Register of First Aiders

Thanks to the work of Devi Shanti, the committee is in an advanced stage of preparing a Risk Management Plan. The draft plan requires a first aider for each outdoor activity. As a first step towards achieving the plan, the committee is preparing a Register of Currently Qualified First Aiders.

If you have a current First Aid Certificate to Level 2, and would be able to fulfil the first aider role for at least some of the excursions or outdoor activities, would you please notify the Secretary.

If your qualification has expired, but you would be willing to bring your qualifications up to date, or if you would be willing to become qualified, and would be willing to act as first aider on excursions, would you please also notify the Secretary.

Bird Survey at Epsom Waste Water Plant
14 August 2015 by Anne Bridley

John and Kate Lindner and myself surveyed the big lagoon and May Swamp and along Bendigo Ck. The small pond in Wallenjoe Rd was dry, and water levels were generally lower than usual. This provided good feeding for some 60 busy Red-necked Avocets and a dozen Black-winged Stilts in May Swamp. On the big lagoon male Musk and Blue-billed Ducks were trying to attract females. The area was patrolled by Whistling and Black Kites and a Swamp Harrier. The hardest birds to see were a pair of Spotless Crakes, which fed in and around the bases of the reeds in May Swamp. The bird list of the day is on page 8.

BFNC Planning Meeting Report
15 August 2015 by Jenny Shield

The Planning Meeting was attended by about 20 people. Vanessa Richardson facilitated the day, and ensured that all discussions took place in a safe environment.

We each shared what we appreciate about being a member of the Club, and what we would like to be improved or added to the Club's activities.

As we would expect, the enjoyment of the company of like-minded people, and learning more about the natural environment, topped the list of what we appreciate.

From all our individually stated responses, Vanessa identified improvements in communication at a number of levels as the most important theme expressed by the group. It was identified that communications could be improved: in the Committee, between some individual members, amongst the wider membership of the Club and to the local Public and wider established groups like the media, monitoring and scientific groups. We then had a brief discussion around some of the issues.

The ideas from the meeting will be referred to the new committee for action. **This is a reminder to consider nominating for the committee at the AGM on 9 September.**

A list of the suggestions collated at the Planning Meeting, are available to members from Jenny (jennyshield66@gmail.com or 0455138444).

The Committee thanks all those who attended for their contributions. We particularly thank Vanessa for initiating and facilitating the meeting. It was a very worthwhile event.

Otway Fungi Id for July ***Whirrakee***
(see July edition, page 7) from Joy Clusker; The white shelf fungus is likely *Laetiporus portentosus*, and the delicate one, *Mycena fumosa*. Thanks Joy.

August Family Nature Club excursion – Tree Planting at Kangaroo Flat Botanic Gardens
It was a great event, attended by many. A big thank you from the FNC to the Field nats , many turned up to help and a big thank you to Kerrie Norris for organising the event and the purchase of plants. Mark and Luke, rangers from the city of Bendigo were fantastic, a favorite activity was moving a tree and many dead tree branches into the water for frog habitat (see above). I hope we have lots of Field Nats turn up for future events, it is much appreciated (by Joy Clusker)

Transforming the bare ground… It would be great to see this site in a year's time.

I am guessing that all these plants were in the ground at the end of the day…

Geology excursion (July 12) Castlemaine Daylesford area (see John Lindner's report on page 9)

Stop 1: (right) View of Mount Consultation from Hamilton's Lane.

Stop 12 (below)
Sailors Falls

The excursion weather: After a very wet, cold Saturday, Sunday actually dawned sunny and clear, but not warm. However this only lasted until mid –morning, when rain clouds gradually moved in from the west. By the time we left Daylesford in the late afternoon, it had really set in.
(this part, including the comment on the next page), had to be excised from John's report on page 9 due to lack of space there)

…and it was very cold down south, the result of a strong polar air stream. Snow had fallen at Mount Franklin on Saturday – it was still present on the pasture grasses of the outside north-west slopes, and inside the crater, where it may have been several centimetres thick. There were numerous sightseers who had driven up to view the spectacle

Stop 2 (above) View of Mount Franklin with snow, from the Guildford Plateau.

Stop 3 (above)
View of Table Hill from the Guildford Lookout

Stop 7 (right) Radial jointing in the nose of the lava flow at Clydesdale

Participants of the **wattle excursion (August 23)** admiring the view. It looks like it was the perfect weekend to see the Whirrakee wattle. John Lindner's report and more photos (these are by Joy Clusker) will appear next month.

Advertisement for 'Bushland Stories Project'

The VNPA bushland stories project focuses on finding and documenting interesting stories from local people about their experiences in the local bushland. If you have an interesting story to tell (all of you will!), please contact Marcel Altena by phone (0424 157 123) or by e-mail: s3369719@student.rmit.edu.au

Bird Survey at the Epsom Waste Water Plant, 14 August 2015 by Anne Bridley

...continued from page 3. Here is the bird list:

Blue-billed Duck	4	Musk Duck	13
Australian Wood Duck		Black Swan	62
Pacific Black Duck	10	Grey Teal	16
Australasian Shoveler	6	Chestnut Teal	60
Australasian Grebe	4	Hardhead	8
Hoary-headed Grebe	30	Great Cormorant	4
Little Pied Cormorant	1	Australian Pelican	3
Red-necked Avocet	67	Straw-necked Ibis	2
Whistling Kite	2	Black Kite	1
Spotless Crake	2	Swamp Harrier	1
Purple Swamp-hen	20	Dusky Moorhen	1
Black-winged Stilt	12	Eurasian Coot	380
Black-fronted Dotterel	1	Red-kneed Dotterel	6
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	3		

Masked Lapwing, Crested Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Galah, Long-billed Corella, Musk Lorikeet, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Eastern Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Superb Fairy-wren, Red Wattlebird, Noisy Miner, White-plumed Honeyeater, Crested Shrike-tit, Grey Shrike-thrush, Magpie-lark, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Grey Currawong, Australian Raven, Red-browed Finch, Welcome Swallow, Little Grassbird, Common Blackbird, Common Myna, Common Froglet, Black Wallaby (Bendigo Ck)

Geology Excursion Report by John Lindner

Sunday 12 July, Castlemaine-Daylesford area

Leader: Eric Wilkinson. Thanks are due for his efforts in reconnoitering the route with me preparing detailed notes and providing the commentary at and between locations.

Participants: 13 people attended on the day.

Activities: We made 12 main stops on the way, some of which involved a short walk.

1. Mount Consultation (see page 5)

This was a view of the volcanic mound, obtained at about one kilometre distant from a road off the Pyrenees Highway. We were not able to climb the volcano, since it is on private property and the access road is a little difficult. The hill is a lava dome, with both scoriaceous (containing gas cavities) and ropy lava. Its probable date is around 1.6 million years BP, similar to Bald Hill at Woodstock. There is a short lava flow to the north-west.

2. Guildford Plateau

The basalt originated from an eruption point near Daylesford, and flowed down the ancestral Loddon River valley 3 million years BP. At that time the rising of the Muckleford Fault created an escarpment, behind which the lava was dammed. That accounts for the rounded shape of the plateau, with a finger-like extension to the west, which represents the bypassing of the main body by some of the lava. The top of the lava flow, completely flat, has been little altered by weathering.

However, the watercourses have carved out new valleys around the edges of the resistant basalt mass - Campbell's Creek and the Loddon River on the east and south; Muckleford Creek on the west. In those places the softer Ordovician material has been eroded away to leave the plateau as an example of inverted relief – what was once in a valley or depression is now the high point of the land-scape because of its resistance to weathering and erosion. The huge amounts of material that were removed by these waterways are now part of the flat northern plains. This occurred at a time when the climate was much wetter and warmer, factors which enable weathering and erosion to occur at a very fast rate.

3. Guildford Lookout.

This is reached by a short but very steep road just out of Guildford. On top is a finely made, basalt lookout platform, with a directional rose. From this point you get excellent views of Table Hill (another lava tongue exhibiting inverted relief, see page 6), Mount Franklin and the Guildford Plateau. The first of these features has been isolated by streams eroding material on each side, and are hence called twin lateral streams.

4. Basalt over Tertiary gravels and Ordovician bedrock

This stop was on the Guildford to Tarilta back road, where we were looking at the side of Table Hill, previously seen from the lookout (see page 6). Looking up the steep slope, at

the bottom you see the underlying, sedimentary bedrock, followed by the river gravels which were once part of the bed of the ancestral river, topped by the basalt layer.

5. The big River Red Gum at Guildford
We had morning tea beneath this impressive vegetable monster, which has lost several huge, hollow limbs on one side after a "twister" rambled across the land earlier this year. Strangely enough, seeing the thickness of these shed limbs up close, adds to your impression of the magnificence of this tree.

6. Guildford Plateau and Muckleford Fault
This was a view obtained from the Guildford to Newstead road. The extensive edge of the plateau reveals the columnar jointing in the basalt, a factor which enables erosion to occur more easily. There are several heaps of waste material tunneled from the river gravels buried under the basalt (what is termed the deep lead). The Muckleford fault occurred at about this point.

7. Basalt flow at Clydesdale
This flow is completely separate from that which formed the Guildford Plateau. It originnated from Mount Franklin, and flowed down the bed of Jim Crow Creek. Its age is about half a million years. The flow has then of course been left upstanding by the actions of Yandoit and Jim Crow Creeks, another example of twin lateral streams. At our viewpoint, opposite the termination of the flow, the jointing pattern in the basalt is radial, rather than parallel and vertical (see page 6).

8. Old and new basalt flows at Yandoit
We were located on the younger basalt flow from Mount Franklin down the Jim Crow Creek valley, but looked west to an older and more elevated basalt flow, which originated further to the south about 3 million years ago.

9. Leslie Road, on the north-west flanks of Mount Franklin
Subsidiary to the main cone, are the smaller cones of Mount Stewart to the north, and Lady Franklin to the west. The former is the origin of the flows down Jim Crow Creek, and precedes the Mount Franklin cone. The latter is an example of a parasitic cone, built up in the final stages of the eruption of the main one.The other prominent bulging shapes around the base of the mountain are remnants of the original shape as it was forming.

10. Mount Franklin
The uppermost part of the volcanic cone is composed of scoria, which is quite lightweight rock due to being full of gas cavities. We picked up several pieces and were impressed how little they weighed. The gas cavities form when the rock is depressurized upon eruption, similar to the way in which gas bubbles form in an aerated drink when it is opened. Some of the rock has few cavities, and some has a lot. We walked part of the way around the rim of the crater, which includes the summit point (635 metres ASL). The age of the volcano is about half a million years. (see view from stop 2 on page 6)

11.Wombat Hill, Daylesford
This was our lunch stop, but it was getting very cold, just a few degrees of freezing . . . you think of . . . you think of . . . a sunny beach in the tropics or your own cosy nest with electric blanket, just to raise the temperature a smidge. Eric's notes said "a pleasant picnic spot" – surely he must have been on some delusional strong medication !

12. Sailors Falls (see page 5)
This is another lava flow from somewhere further south, but upon which the creek has maintained its route on top of the lava. The creek has progressively cut back upstream, so that there is a small gorge with the falls at the apex. The erosion of the lava has exposed the columnar jointing within the basalt. The falls were not flowing, but other ground water was gushing lower down. There is a fine growth of tree ferns and Manna Gums in the gorge.

Various residual volcanoes on the road between Daylesford and Malmsbury
We did not stop the bus at any of these six locations, all of which appear as high, rounded mounds, some with forest and some without. They range from Snake Hill at Coomoora (638 metres ASL) to Pattens Hill at Drummond (548 metres ASL). If you are a farmer here, you surely own some good, rich volcanic dirt.

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club 2015 Spring Campout details by John Lindner

Date	**Weekend 17 – 18 October 2015**
Location	**Mount Samaria State Park** This quite small park (7000 hectares) is located between Benalla and Mansfield. It comprises an elevated, moist plateau with it own special group of plants.
Organisers	John Lindner (telephone 54483406), with Alistair White and Simon Hay.
Notification	Please notify John if you intend to participate. If no answer, please leave a message (your phone number, number of people coming with you).
Campsite	Spring Creek Sawmill camp, on the plateau at its midpoint.
Fees/booking	For this kind of basic camping, there are no fees and no booking required.
Distance	Via Goornong, Colbinabbin, Rushworth, Murchison, Violet Town, Warrenbayne area (not the township) and Swanpool. The distance from Bendigo to the campsite is about 210 kilometres. Allow 2.5 - 3 hours.
Road type	The last 17.0 kilometres up the mountain from its base at the end of Mount Samaria Road to the Spring Creek Sawmill camp is an unsealed, dirt road. It is quite rough in places and should be driven with care at a moderate speed. There are steep drop-offs to the side in several places. It would be very preferable if this section of the route was negotiated in daylight.
Map	A sketch map of the route from the Hume Freeway to Swanpool township and on to the campsite will be supplied at the club meeting in October.
Facilities	• Pit toilet • Fireplaces/barbeques • Spaces for camping
Please bring	• You must bring all your own water for whatever purposes. There is no water tank. However you can replenish supplies from Wild Dog Creek, where it crosses the road about one kilometre away. This water is excellent quality as the catchment is all timbered and undisturbed. • Firewood, if you want a barbeque or a campfire. There will be a lot of wood lying around in places, but it would be best if we did not use this. • Wet weather gear, plenty of warm clothing, walking boots, • camera, binoculars, notebook, spotlight • All your food
Information	You can download and print the information and map for the Mount Samaria State Park from the Parks Victoria website at www.parks.vic.gov.au
Attractions	• Vegetation communities: tall forest of Manna Gum, Messmate Stringybark and Peppermints; varied shrub understory. • Wildflowers – unknown as I have not been to this area in Spring. • Waterfalls – Wild Dog Creek and Back Creek. • Various walks on a constructed system linking foot tracks and old roads. • Birds, including the Superb Lyrebird • Mammals, including the Greater Glider.
Activities	Rather than an unstructured program where everybody does as they please, we may try to formalize some of the activities (eg. botany) so that we have a leader with a group interested in that subject for a set time.
Program	Friday: Arrive in the afternoon or earlier if you want Saturday: You could come up Saturday but this leaves you a lot less time am Activities from 9.00 am onwards (to be decided) pm Activities (to be decided) Sunday am Activities (to be decided) pm Pack up and depart

Diary

All Club meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High St Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday September 9 **7.30pm**
This is the club's Annual General Meeting. The speakers are Steve Meacher and Eric Wilkinson, and their topic is 'Leadbeater's Possum: Flagship for the Forests'
All are warmly welcome.

Club Excursions
Spring Campout at Mt Samaria State Park.
Weekend 17 - 18 October
Full details See page 10

South-East Australian Naturalists Network (SEANA)
The spring camp will be hosted by the Donald FNC. The dates are Friday 25 to Sunday 27 September. For further information check the May Whirrakee. N.B. re: Accommodation Please be advised that if you are still wishing to book accommodation in Donald for the SEANA Spring Camp the contact details to book a site at the Donald Racecourse have changed. Please now contact Jack 0429 771 655 or Dianne 0409 704 951. There are plenty of non-powered sites available.

City of Greater Bendigo – Environment Strategy Forum (3): RePower - Considering Renewable Energy
Saturday September 5 12.30pm to 4pm
Science and Discovery Centre,
7 Railway Place. There will be a key note speaker and a Discussion Panel.

Family Nature Club
The Nature Club activities will continue in 2015, so look out for announcements or check out their website.
Registration:
Bendigonatureclub@gmail.com or 5443-1326
http://bendigofamilynatureclub.blogspot.com/

Bendigo Native Plant Group meeting.
All interested people are welcome to come along. Meeting starts at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of the month, Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall. Next meeting: September 15

ANGAIR Wildflower & Art weekend
19th and 20th September, 10am – 4.30pm
Anglesea Memorial Hall, McMillan Street Anglesea.
For details check: admin@angair.org.au or call 52631085

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.
WRIN meetings held on the 1st Saturday of the month at 1pm the Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall

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New Book: Flora and Fauna of the Victorian and South Australian Mallee
$ 40. Bendigo contact: Heidi Lindner
e-mail: heidi.lindner@impulse.net.au

Managing Victoria's biodiversity under climate change- Symposium October 8-9 2015 at BIO21 Institute, 30 Flemington Road, Parkville.
The program looks great; there will be something for everyone. For more information, call the Victorian National Parks Association on (03) 9341 6500 or email philipi@vnpa.org.au

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Australian Naturalists Network The ANN Get-Together for 2016 (ANN16) will be held in Western Australia and hosted by the WA Naturalists' Club.
Please contact the ANN 2016 Committee and the secretary Margaret Larke by email at ANN16@wanaturalists.org.au; mlarke@iinet.net.au for more information.